



CONGRESSIONAL BUDGET OFFICE COST ESTIMATE

April 13, 1998

H.R. 2925 **Deadbeat Parents Punishment Act of 1997**

As ordered reported by the House Committee on the Judiciary on April 1, 1998

CBO estimates that enacting H.R. 2925 would not result in any significant cost to the federal government. Because enactment of H.R. 2925 could affect direct spending and receipts, pay-as-you-go procedures would apply to the bill. However, CBO estimates that any impact on direct spending and receipts would not be significant. H.R. 2925 contains no intergovernmental or private-sector mandates as defined in the Unfunded Mandates Reform Act of 1995 and would have no impact on the budgets of state, local, or tribal governments.

H.R. 2925 would establish federal felony violations for the failure to pay child support. Violators would be subject to imprisonment, fines, and mandatory restitution of the unpaid child support. Under current law the failure to pay child support payments is a misdemeanor, and the Department of Justice pursues, on average, about 150 cases each year. CBO expects that enacting H.R. 2925 would not significantly increase federal caseload; therefore, we estimate that any increase in federal costs for law enforcement, court proceedings, or prison operations would not be significant. Any such additional costs would be subject to the availability of appropriated funds.

Because those prosecuted and convicted of failing to fulfill their child support obligations could be subject to fines, the government might collect additional fines if H.R. 2925 is enacted. Collections of such fines are recorded in the budget as governmental receipts, or revenues, which are deposited in the Crime Victims Fund and spent in the following year. Any additional collections from enacting H.R. 2925 are likely to be negligible, however, because it is not likely that the federal government would pursue a significant number of additional cases under this bill. Because any increase in direct spending would equal the fines collected with a one-year lag, the additional direct spending also would be negligible.

The CBO staff contact for this estimate is Mark Grabowicz. This estimate was approved by Robert A. Sunshine, Deputy Assistant Director for Budget Analysis.